



Saguaro National Park News Release

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WHAT DOES FREEDOM MEAN TO ME? LOCAL STUDENT WINS EXPRESSIONS OF FREEDOM NATIONAL ART COMPETITION

Tucson, AZ – Arianna Martinez Reyna of Tucson, AZ is the first-place winner of the *Expressions of Freedom* National Art Competition sponsored by the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation. She will receive a \$2,500 scholarship award and an *America the Beautiful - the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass* for her photo commemorating the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation.

“This contest challenged students to share their personal reflections on what freedom means to them – with truly inspiring results,” National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis said. “Their art conveys the enduring themes of our nation’s struggles for freedom and equality.”

“We are proud that Arianna has won first place in this nationwide competition,” said Darla Sidles, Superintendent of Saguaro National Park. “Arianna and other students of her school, the Arizona College Prep Academy, have worked with Saguaro National Park for four years, conducting service learning projects through science and art. We are also appreciative of teacher Dan Bell’s leadership in inspiring these young people to recognize national parks as places of life-long learning through their work in Saguaro National Park. His work with these students exemplifies how national parks continue to influence our nation’s future while preserving our nation’s historic pathway towards freedom for all people.”

The nationwide student artistic competition offered youth an opportunity to connect with the many national parks that tell the stories of the nation’s journey from Civil War to civil rights – from Stones River National Battlefield to the General Grant National Memorial, from Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park to the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site. Competitors used their art to explore the enduring themes of our nation’s struggles for freedom and equality for all.

2013 marks the 150th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, which spelled out emancipation as the U.S. government’s new policy, a vital step on the gradual path to freedom for all Americans.

“Through this unique competition, we honor the American civil rights journey that began more than 150 years ago,” said Neil Mulholland, President and CEO of the National Park Foundation. “The National Park Foundation and its African American Experience Fund applaud the outstanding creativity of the youth participants and we are proud to help America’s National Park System ensure the important stories of our nation’s history are forever told.”

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Ten winners and eight honorable mentions were selected from more than 250 student submissions in three categories: photography, poetry and digital short films. Students between the ages of 13-18 years were challenged to answer the question, "What does freedom mean to you?"

Arianna's winning entry along with all the other winning entries are featured on the [National Park Service](#) and the [African American Experience Fund's](#) websites.

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***Editor's Note:** There will be a small award ceremony at the Arizona College Prep Academy (formerly AmeriSchools College Preparatory Academy) at 1:30, today, April 24. Media are welcome to attend. Please contact [Andy L. Fisher@nps.gov](mailto:Andy.L.Fisher@nps.gov) or 520 733 5139 to confirm attendance or for more information.*

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 401 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

About the National Park Foundation. You are the owner of 84 million acres of the world's most treasured memorials, landscapes, ecosystems, and historic sites -- all protected in America's 401 national parks. Chartered by Congress, the National Park Foundation is the official charity of America's national parks. We work hand in hand with the National Park Service to connect you and all Americans to the parks, and to make sure that they are preserved for the generations who will follow. Join us in supporting your national parks -- this is your land. www.nationalparks.org